

SEATTLE PREPARATORY SCHOOL CONCUSSION – FAQ'S

*“A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. **This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging brain cells.**” – Center for Disease Control and Prevention*

Given the serious nature of concussions, Seattle Prep prioritizes healing above academics, athletics, and other activities. If a student pushes themselves too much while concussed, it will prolong or exacerbate the concussion, potentially causing more serious injury, longer healing times, and/or long-term impacts.

My student has sustained a concussion – now what?

- If you have not done so already, schedule an appointment with your pediatrician, PCP, or a sports medicine physician to receive an official diagnosis.
- Ensure that your student is engaging in **cognitive rest**; they should not attempt homework assignments/studying in the first 48-hours of being symptomatic. Your student should also avoid ‘screen time’ (cell phones, TV, computers, etc.).
- Ensure that your student is checking in daily with Andrew Carlson (Seattle Prep’s Athletic Trainer) in the athletic training room, located in the gym. After school is the best time to check in with Andrew.
 - **This is an essential part of the process, as it allows us to monitor the progression of your student’s symptoms and help them transition back to the classroom and athletics/activities as smoothly as possible. If your student is not at school for several days due to their concussion, please have them check in starting the day they return.**
- You will receive communication from the Prep Concussion Team within 24 hours regarding the specific Return-to-Learn academic guidelines as your student recovers. These guidelines are also distributed to all your student’s teachers, so they are aware of your student’s current limitations.

What about homework and school assignments?

Seattle Prep has developed a Return-to-Learn (RTL) Protocol that is designed to accommodate your student as they recover from their concussion, helping them transition as they become asymptomatic and re-integrate into the classroom. The Concussion Team, including the Director of Student Success, Learning Resource Center (LRC) staff, and Counselors, work closely with faculty to facilitate this process. The RTL Protocol includes:

Level 1: DIAGNOSED/ASSESSED CONCUSSION

48-hour period of cognitive rest – no academic work. This means no homework, tests, quizzes, papers, or projects should be attempted. Specific information regarding this cognitive rest period will be communicated directly to you via email from the Concussion Team.

Level 2: SYMPTOMATIC POST 48-HOUR ASSESSMENT

Up to 3-week period of modified schoolwork, studying, and homework according to symptoms. Specific information on modifications will be communicated directly to you via email from the Concussion Team. No tests or quizzes may be taken until cleared.

Level 3 – SYMPTOMATIC LONGER THAN 3 WEEKS- DIAGNOSIS OF POST-CONCUSSIVE SYNDROME

This level is activated once your student’s symptoms persist for >3 weeks and it lasts as long as necessary while your student recovers. Should your student’s symptoms continue longer than 3 weeks, we ask that you schedule a follow-up appointment with your physician; this allows the physician to provide additional, patient-specific recommendations and guidelines for academic accommodations according to their particular symptoms. Any physician information should be sent directly to Concussion@seaprep.org. No tests or quizzes may be taken until cleared.

Clearance – RETURN TO NORMAL SCHOOL WORKLOAD, CATCH UP ON MISSING WORK WITH SUPPORT

Once your student reports being asymptomatic for 24-hours, they should see their physician to be cleared from the RTL protocol. Please send clearance documentation to Concussion@seaprep.org as soon as you have it. Once a student is cleared, they will receive specific instructions from the Concussion Team on how to catch up on any missing assignments, tests, or quizzes, and what the timeframe is for this. Students will receive support from their Counselor, teachers, and the LRC during this phase.

My student is worried about falling behind in school. Should they keep doing their regular school routine?

The long-term health of your student's brain is our top priority. As such, students should pay attention to their symptoms as they attend school and attempt schoolwork. If they experience an increase in symptoms, they should take a break or stop doing the work. They can incrementally add more work as their symptoms allow. Ignoring or pushing through symptoms may prolong the healing process and make it more difficult to catch up in the end. Students will receive support once they are cleared to catch up on any assignments, tests, or quizzes they missed while concussed.

Why doesn't Prep allow students to take tests/quizzes while concussed?

- The brain may have swelling, chemical changes, or damaged cells while concussed. This means the student may not be capable of showing us what they understand while concussed. Assessing a student while concussed may yield inaccurate results.
- When students take tests or quizzes while concussed – even if they think they're "ok to take it" – they often don't perform as well as they'd like. As a result, the accuracy of the test or quiz grade often comes into question and/or causes further stress.
- Testing while concussed can exacerbate the concussion symptoms, thus prolonging the healing process.

What if my student is currently participating in athletics?

Washington State law (Zachary Lystedt Law) requires that all student athletes returning from a diagnosed concussion complete a five-step Return-to-Play protocol prior to full, unrestricted participation in athletics. Once your student-athlete is documented being 24-hours symptom-free, they complete the graduated progression below which is facilitated by Seattle Prep's Athletic Trainer. If at any point during the progression their symptoms return, we attempt the previous successful step again once they return to asymptomatic state.

Step 1: Light aerobic exercise

Step 2: Sport-specific exercise

Step 3: Non-contact practice

Step 4: Contact practice

Step 5: Unrestrictive return to full practice/competitions

Who are the best people to return out to with questions?

Please reach out to us with any questions or concerns you may have. We have resources for you and your family as you all navigate your student's recovery.

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Seattle Prep Concussion Team

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